



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OFFICE OF
ENFORCEMENT AND
COMPLIANCE ASSURANCE

JUL 16 2013

Thomas J. Magnuson
Regional HCP Coordinator
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
5600 American Blvd. West, Suite 990
Bloomington, MN 55437-1458

Dear Mr. Magnuson,

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's 2013 Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the NiSource Gas Transmission and Storage, Inc. Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan, Application For Incidental Take Permit (CEQ No. 20130166).

EPA commends the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's efforts to develop a Habitat Conservation Plan to avoid, minimize, and mitigate the take of threatened and endangered species associated with the NiSource Inc.'s operations in 14 eastern states. EPA recognizes the importance of a coordinated approach between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, other cooperating agencies and NiSource Inc. over the proposed 50-year term of the Incidental Take Permit (ITP).

We appreciate that the Final EIS addresses our comments regarding the issuance of an ITP for 50-year timeframe, and monitoring and mitigation over the duration of the ITP. We also appreciate that the Final EIS provides additional detail of new construction that will occur under the preferred alternative.

Please contact me or Jessica Aresta-DaSilva (aresta-dasilva.jessica@epa.gov; 202-564-1567) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Susan E. Bromm
Director
Office of Federal Activities